

MESOPOTAMIAN MINUTE

- Current News on Agriculture & USDA in Iraq -
Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Baghdad

Sunday, October 10, 2010

SFA Agriculture Working Group Meeting - FAS Baghdad staff hosted a Strategic Framework Agreement Agriculture Working Group meeting along with Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture officials and discussed several key mutually agreed upon initiatives. One outcome of the Working Group is the reestablishment of agriculture sector sub-committee meetings. The first of these sector meetings are expected to be held by the end of October. These meetings are designed to ensure that momentum is maintained on achieving the mutually agreed upon goals to improve the agricultural situation in Iraq.



Participants in the Widows food canning training

Canning Project for Iraqi Women – A group of 20 widows from Um Al Abeed village participated in a training project for food preservation canning. The project was organized and carried out by the Al-Shabab Organization for Civil Development (NGO) with the aid of a grant from the embassy's Quick Relief Fund. The project focused on food preservation as well as food safety. Canning food will enable these women to preserve food and secure freshness for a longer period, as well as provide them with a measure of food security. They now also have the opportunity generate income by selling food that will not be consumed. Lance Daugherty and Thad White are Ag Advisors involved with this project.



Widow's Carpets for sale

Widows Carpet Sale - Several Iraqi women trained to craft handmade carpets as a means of creating a sustainable income, presented their carpets at an open-air sale in front of the American Club at Embassy Baghdad. The women participated in a training organized by PRT Baghdad with the support of Ag Advisor, Thad White. According to sources close to the organizers, the carpet sale was profitable as many carpets sold at 97% above the asking price.

Personnel Update- There are currently 33 USDA personnel in Iraq including those with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), at Embassy Baghdad or embedded with U.S. military units